3

No. 2, + 16 pages

AN OVERTURE

BY

A PRESBYTER:

To the Synods of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida—Greeting.

BRETAREN: By charter the Theological Seminary at Columbia, South Carolina, is under your control, and "a plan of government" formulates that control. The following regulation is found in that plan, section 3, art. 12:

ART. 12. Whenever a Professor shall hereafter become seventy years of age, he shall be retired at the close of that scholastic year, *unless* retained in office by an annual election in which he shall receive the votes of a majority of the Board. And when a Professor is thus retired, the Board is authorized to appropriate to him such stipend as it may deem proper.

It appears that there are two entirely different constructions placed on this "seventy-years" rule:

1. One view is that age is merely the occasion of re-election, with a presumption in favor of continuance, as a matter of course, if well qualified.

2. The other view is that when a Professor has attained or passed his seventieth year, this circumstance alone may be taken as a sufficient reason for retiring him, although his qualifications and devotion to his work may be of the highest order, his health and vigor uuimpaired, and his labors most faithful, efficient and acceptable.

Which of these is the view of the Synods? Doubtless the first, it might reasonably be said. But the purpose of this overture is to call forth an expression in answer to the question,—Which of these views, the first or the second, represents the mind of the members of the governing Synods?

The occasion of this appeal or overture is that the Directors of the Seminary at their last meeting, in May, 1897, took a most important action founded on the second construction of the rule given above, viz: That age alone may be a sufficient reason for retiring Professors, notwithstanding their acknowledged fitness otherwise for their work and success in it. Previous actions, where age was involved, have been founded on the first construction, viz: that age was only the occasion of re-election, with a presumption in favor of continuance if well qualified. The late action, therefore, is a new departure and a surprise. In fact, one of the Professors, and somewhat the elder of the two affected by this action, was in his seventieth year when first elected, in 1893. His age was freely canvassed in the Board before election. But he was unanimously and cordially elected on first ballot, and that, too, when he had, though asked to do so, declined to offer his name as a candidate. But his name was presented by those who knew him and knew that he had resigned his former position and thought he should be at work, such as Drs. Bryson, Quarles, Hoge, and Palmer. These brethren knew that he was a man educated at home and abroad under the most favorable circumstances, and distinguished as an educator, with special qualifications for the chair of Apologetics; that he was a Virginian by birth; that his ancestors for more than two hundred years from their first landing had lived in the South; that he had courageously defended the South and the Southern Presbyterian Church, when it cost something to do so; that as a member of the New York City Presbytery he had been tried and persecuted for so doing, especially on account of his "Letter to the Synod of Missouri," just before its union with the Southern Assembly. These brethren supposed that he would feel at home here, and be quite disposed to take service in the Southern Presbyterian Church, though he had for many years been engaged in the service of the State as head of a Southern State University. When informed, by the Committee of the Board, of the unanimity and cordiality of this action, and also that the Faculty of the Seminary favored his election, he changed his plans and entertained the appoint-

ment and incurred no little expense in relocating and in resuming house-keeping in Columbia in connection with his work in the Seminary, and in obedience to what seemed plainly an indication of God's leading Providence. If any one supposes that he thrust himself on the Seminary, even in the remotest sense, it is a gross wrong. And certainly he had no reason to anticipate a departure from the rule as acted on in his original election, and in like manner acted on every year since, as his present health and qualifications are absolutely, in every way, better now than when he first came to the Seminary, with no premonitions of any infirmity or disability pending in the near future. His health and condition, and on most positive assurances it may in all truthfulness and modesty be added, the labors in his Department furnished no occasion, suggestion nor provocation of the surprising action that was taken: one seemingly has to go afield to find satisfying reasons for this procedure. The simple truth is that his health and vigor would now favorably compare with most men at forty-five to fifty-five. An eminent physician once remarked that the last place to go for a man's age is to the family Bible.

Let it be borne in mind, that his election and three re-elections since, in 1894–5 and 6, have all been approved by the Charter Synods, and the present probability is that at the end of this year his claims will be even stronger than hitherto.

The minute of the action, which has occasioned this overture, will now be given:

"Whereas two of the Professors some years ago reached the age fixed by the Constitution beyond which they could not hold office except by annual re-election of the Board, and have been since that time annually re-elected to their respective chairs under the provisions of art. 12, section 3, of the Constitution.

"And whereas, in the ordinary course of human events, it cannot be reasonably hoped that this Board can again re-elect said Professors to their respective positions in fulfilment of the spirit of the Constitution.

"A special committee [was appointed] to submit to the Board of Directors at their annual meeting in 1898, names of persons qualified to fill the respective chairs," &c.

Some time after being notified of this action, one of these

Professors having occasion to write the President of the Board of Directors on some business left in his hands, after making his business point, the following inquiry was submitted :

"COLUMBIA, July 2d, 1897.

* * * "And now, Dr. ——, I desire to know, and think it right and proper that I and my friends should know, whether there was any reason other than my age for the action taken by the Board of Directors relative to my chair in the Seminary? As President of the Board, you are certainly the proper one for me to inquire of, and I hope you will speak with perfect frankness and fulness. If there was any charge or intimation of my unfitness for any reason before the mind of the Board, then it is surely due me that I should know it."

To this inquiry the following frank, cordial and manly but somewhat apologetic answer was promptly given.

After the business part he continues :

"SELMA, ALA., July 5th, 1897.

"In regard to the action of the Board of Directors of the Seminary relative to your chair and also that of Dr. ——, I wish to say that, so far as I know, the matter of age was the sole reason that prompted the action. Several of the Board expressed themselves as appreciating very highly the quality of work that you are doing in the Seminary. As for myself, I warmly advocated your re-election on the ground of the vigorous and able manner in which yon presented the subjects of your department to your classes. I can say with pleasure and in all frankness, that I heard no one intimate anything touching your unfitness for the chair. The Board seems to feel that acting under the Constitution as regards the 'age limit' of Professors, and considering the general interest of the institution committed to their care by the controlling Synods, it would be necessary in the near future to fill the two chairs above mentioned with younger men. In order to make proper preparation for such an important matter, and to give Dr. —— and yourself due notice, the action was taken, with the desire to in no way reflect upon you two brethren, whom we all hold in high esteem and love for your work's sake. I trust, therefore, Doctor, that your mind will be at rest; that you will be preserved in full vigor of health and strength; and that you will be enabled to do your work as admirably next year as heretofore.

Truly and fraternally yours, (Signed) RUSSELL CECIL.

This puts it beyond question that the avowed reason, and the only known reason in the Board itself, for this extraordi-

nary action, so seriously affecting the life work and outlook of two faithful and honored servants of the church of God, and having an unmistakable evil trend, was age and only their age. Personal assurances, from others than the President of the Board, are confirmatory of his utterance. The evidence, therefore, unequivocally places this action under the second construction of the "seventy years" rule, given above. And it is believed to be morally certain that that construction never did, and does not now, represent the mind of the Synods. Without imputing, or even intimating, designed wrong, a sober second thought must plainly suggest that a serious mistake has been made either in this action or in former actions.

The strictures on the rule and action under it are based on the merit of the case, and are not personal, but pertain to the well being of the Seminary and the interests of the church. Any Presbyter is entitled to a respectful hearing in such a case. The language of Senator Daniel may here be pertinent, if any be disposed to take umbrage: "I think," says the Senator, "that Governor —— oversteps the mark when he says I commit more than an impropriety in holding that Judges are not beyond the pale of criticism. No good man desires to be beyond it. Criticism is the weapon of truth, and all public servants must be open to it, whether they be judges or otherwise; and they always wish to be open to it, if they are honest and capable. The disposition to avoid fair criticism is the brand of suspicion. We are not to be taught obsequiousness under a plea of conservatism. As a freeman, it is my right and as a Senator it is my duty to criticise public officials and public measures. I shall endeavor to observe that circumspection, decorum and moderation in doing so which good sense, public respect and genteel manners dictate." This language is as becoming the pen of a Presbyter in ecclesiastical matters as that of a Senator in political matters, whether in self-defence or in advocacy of the general interests of the Church or the country.

There are several new members of the Board, who may not have had occasion to consider this peculiar rule in all its bear-

ings. And if this action is taken as the rule, it is believed that there is not another educational institution on the face of the earth, heathen or civilised, that has such an age limit pure and simple to the eligibility of a teacher.

This action has given occasion to learn most explicitly that some of the best men in the Southern Presbyterian Church wholly disapprove of this seventy years rule; nay, they even denounce it as offensive, arbitrary and wrong; as sanctioning or tempting to an unrighteous discrimination against age, as unsettling and weakening the moral force of the incumbent, and occasioning what amounts to intrigue for self or others, with all its demoralisation; and, moreover, as falling in with the hyena howl over the dead line in church service; whereas the very few whom God spares to the Church in soundness of faith and strength of body and mind, as competent and willing workers, to attain to more than three-score years and ten, should properly be esteemed a divine gift and blessing, and not burdens, nor impedimenta. Look a moment at this matter of age. The infirm, disabled and superannuated are a different class and a tender care, and are not now in view. But the ages of the three most distinguished men in the Southern Presbyterian Church, and all of them still in active usefulness, fall between seventy-seven and eighty. Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton, taught till his death, in his eightieth year; Dr. Samuel Miller, till his ninety-first year; Dr. Charles Hodge, till his eightieth year; Dr. Alexander T. McGill, once a Professor at Columbia, resigned his chair in Princeton Seminary at seventy-seven, and was continued Emeritus till death at eighty-four; and two of the living and active members of the Princeton Seminary Faculty now are over seventy, and their combined ages exceed the combined ages of the two oldest Columbia Professors; Dr. McCosh resigned the Presidency of Princeton College at seventy-six, and continued active Emeritus till death at eighty-three; Dr. Samuel B. Wilson, of Union Seminary, Virginia, died at eighty-seven, and was even then Emeritus; and Dr. David Elliott, of Alleghany, died in harness at eighty-seven; in Columbia Seminary, Dr. A. W. Leland

resigned on account of bodily affliction at seventy-six, and continued Emeritus till eighty-four; and Dr. George Howe was over eighty, when from an accident he died in his chair; not to mention Dr. W. S. Plumer, at seventy-eight. Judge John Marshall died in his eightieth year with faculties undimmed, and it is firmly believed that it was a most propitious circumstance for our country that he had so long a term of office. Judge Taney, of the United States Supreme Court, wore his robes till eighty-seven, and one now on that Bench and in active duty is said to be over eighty. It is the privilege of these Judges to retire on half pay after sixty-five. Several of the United States Senators have been hovering about eighty.

These instances which readily occur are adduced from our own country, and are the contemporaries of the present generation. No reference is made to antediluvians, nor to the extreme instances of modern longevity. A complete enumeration of septuagenarians and octogenarians actively and usefully occupied in various vocations in this and other lands, would roll up a volume. These given may serve to sample a state of fact which heedless and pruriently assertive youth and some of their seniors are only too apt to fail to notice or to appreciate. We have in Cicero's *De Senectute*, his discourse or essay concerning old age, a precious legacy from the past, and it is certainly very pertinent, and it may be of interest to sample it by a few extracts. Having somewhat dwelt on the splendid career and felicitous old age of Quintus Maximus, he continues: "But it is not the great and splendid actions of the hero or the statesman alone, that lead to an easy and agreeable old age. Of this kind, we are told, was the old age of Plato (429–348 B. C.), who continued to employ himself with great satisfaction in his philosophical studies, till death put an end to them in his eighty-first year. Such, too, was that of Isocrates, who is said to have composed his famous discourse, Parthenaicus (in commemoration of patriotic Athenians), in the ninety-fourth [or ninety-seventh] year of his age; and his death did not happen till five years afterwards. His preceptor, Leontinus Gorgias, lived to complete his one hundred and seventh year;

continuing his studies with undiminished spirit and application to his last moments. This celebrated veteran being asked, why he did not put an end to such a tedious length of life? answered, Because I find no reason to complain of old age." After adducing other instances, he continues: "It appears, therefore, that nothing can be more void of foundation than to assert, that old age necessarily disqualifies a man for great affairs of the world. * * If in the great scenes of business, an old man cannot perform a part which requires the force and energy of vigorous years; he can act, however, in a nobler and more important character. It is not by exertions of corporeal strength and activity that the momentous affairs of State are conducted; it is by cold deliberation, by prudent counsel, and by that authoritative influence which ever attend on public esteem; qualifications which are so far from being impaired, that they are usually strengthened and improved by increase of years. And in this opinion, my noble friends, I am persuaded I shall have your concurrence." Cato, the interlocutor, was at this time eighty-four. "Tell me, Naerius, whence it happened, that so considerable a State as yours has thus suddenly fallen to decay?" The principal reason assigned is, "That a swarm of rash, unpractised, young orators had unhappily broke forth and taken the lead among them." It is elsewhere remarked, "That there are but few among mankind who arrive at old age, and this suggests a reason why the affairs of the world are no better conducted." (Well said! thou eloquent heathen.)

But it is further urged, "That old age impairs the memory. This effect, I confess, it may probably have on those memories which were originally infirm, or whose native vigor has not been preserved by a proper exercise. * * The aged indeed seem to be at no loss in remembering whatever is the principal object of their attention. * * Innumerable instances of a strong memory in advanced years might be produced from among our celebrated lawyers, pontiffs and philosphers; for the faculties of the mind will preserve their powers in old age, unless they are suffered to lose their energy and become languid for want of due cultivation. And the truth of this observation may be

confirmed, not only by those examples I have mentioned from the more active and splendid stations of the world, but from instances equally frequent to be met with in the paths of studious and retired life. Sophocles continued in extreme old age to write tragedies—he had almost attained his one hundredth year when he composed Œdipus Colonos (esteemed an unrivalled masterpiece, read with success before the Court to refute the sinister family charge of incompetency). Did length of days weaken the powers of Homer, Hesiod, or Simonides; of Steichones, Socrates, or Gorgias? Did old age interrupt the studies of those first and most distinguished of the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, or Xenocrates? Or, to descend into later times, did grey hairs prove an obstacle to the philosophic pursuits of Zeno, Cleanthes, or that famous Stoic whom you may remember to have seen in Rome, the venerable Diogenes? On the contrary, did not each of these eminent persons persevere in his respective studies with unbroken spirit to the last moment of his extended life?"

And a glance of Cicero's Cato at the advantages of the elderly man as a teacher should be noted. He says: "Nevertheless, there is a certain sweetness of utterance which I know not how, is not subject to be impaired by years; and this melody of voice (old as you see I am, eighty-four), I may venture to say I have not yet lost. There is indeed a species of calm and composed elocution extremely graceful, and perfectly well adapted to advanced years; and I have frequently observed an eloquent old man captivate the attention of his audience, by the charms of this softer and milder tones of delivery. But if age should render the orator unequal to the laborious application of his talents; they may still be usefully exerted. They may be employed in forming young men of genius (yourself, for instance, Scipio, or our friend Laelius,) to a nervous and manly eloquence. And can there be a more pleasing satisfaction to an old man, than to see himself surrounded by a circle of ingenious youths; and to conciliate by these laudable means, their well merited esteem and affection. It will not, I suppose, be denied that old age has at least a suf-

ficient degree of strength remaining to train the rising generation, and instruct them in every duty to which they may hereafter be called; and there cannot, certainly, be a more important or a more honorable occupation * * Indeed, there is a satisfaction in communicating useful knowledge of every kind, which must render any man happy, how much soever time may have impaired the powers of his body, who employs the talents of his mind to so noble and beneficial a purpose."

"Milo is said to have walked the full length of the course of the Olympian games, bearing the whole enormous weight of an ox on his shoulders. Now tell me, which would you choose to possess, this man's extraordinary powers of body, or the sublime genius of Pythagoras? In a word, my friend, make a good use of your youthful vigor so long as it remains; but never let it cost you a sigh when age shall have withdrawn it from you; as reasonably indeed might youth regret the loss of infancy, or manhood the extinction of youth. Nature conducts us, by a regular and insensible progression, through the different seasons of human life; to each of which she has annexed its proper and distinguishing characteristic."

In *The Spectator*, No. 195, Mr. Addison makes the following general observation, which is worthy of citation in this connection: "And here," he says, "I cannot but mention an observation which I have often made upon reading the lives of the philosophers, and comparing them with any series of kings or great men of the same number. If we consider these ancient Sages, a great part of whose philosophy consisted in a temperate and abstemious course of life, one would think the life of a philosopher, and the life of a man, were of two different dates. For we find that the generality of these wise men were nearer a hundred than sixty years of age at the time of their respective deaths."

These extracts from these classic essays cast such a searchlight on "the ordinary course of human events" as to show that men at the turn of seventy may be and often are in the very prime and vigor of their intellectual life and usefulness. To act otherwise than in recognition of this state of fact is to turn the

back on the light of observation and experience, and ignore the leading of God's providence.

There are certain wholesome rules for the conduct of reason which cannot be disregarded with impunity. Says de Morgan: "If the thing which should be made to appear on suitable evidence, at the proper time, is assumed and acted on in advance, such an assumption is a *petitio*"—a vulgar fallacy. In such case the conclusion relative to the premise is *Ignotius aut æque ignotum*—a leap in the dark.

Says Port Royal: "Nothing not a necessary truth should be admitted as certain, unless it be proved by careful observation." It must, therefore, be set down as a certain and indubitable axiom, "That the simple possibility of an event is no sufficient reason for our belief of it."

When such valid principles of judgment are applied to this "seventy years" rule as it now stands before the Synods, it seems to bear the marks of an expedient for some exigency but which is the embodiment of unwisdom as a permanent regulation. It has certainly been weighed in the balance and found equivocal and wrongful. It imposes a grievous burden on the movements of the Seminary, and secures no benefit not attainable in a better way. For Presbyterians, with all their senatorial prestige, to discriminate against old age is an incongruity.

From the point of view of this overture, the following Synodical actions are suggested: Either strip the rule of wrongful equivocation by adopting 1 or 2—

1. In the judgment of this Synod, the seventy-year rule in the Plan of Government of the Seminary at Columbia, was not intended to make age a disability disqualifying a Professor for service in the Seminary: or—

2. That in the judgment of this Synod, in electing or re-electing Septuagenarians to chairs in the Columbia Seminary, no invidious discrimination should be made on account of age, but qualifications alone shall be considered, and age shall not of itself be a disqualification, nor be deemed a disqualifying circumstance.

Or instead of construing by 1 or 2, simply *repeal* the rule by 3,

and sweep it out of existence. This last is the wisest deliverance, to wit—

3. Whatever may have been the reason for its original enactment, this Synod having become satisfied of the unwisdom and inexpediency of it, hereby withdraws its approval of the seventy-years rule in the Plan of Government of the Columbia Seminary. It is liable to misconstruction, and to do more harm than good. If a Professor is unfitted for his work, let his case be dealt with directly on its actual merits, regardless of age.

To adopt the construction of either 1 or 2, would be a mitigation; but, without doubt, in the judgment of this overture, the wisest action by Synod would be to sweep away the excrescence by adopting the third (3).

It is a firm conviction that the action above quoted—passed by a scant *viva voce* majority for which no one is on record—will not and ought not to result in the displacement of the present Professors. If either or both be before the Board as candidates for re-election, and thereby challenge the pretensions of any who may offer to supercede them, should their age render them ineligible! Can the Church furnish a better available man in either line, whether younger or older matters not? If so, it should and no doubt would be their pleasure to step aside with congratulations. But the Board is bound in fidelity to the interests of the Church to select the best, and not to experiment on the students by setting inexperienced journeymen youngsters to work instead of veteran masters, as is too often done. Both Professors in question are experienced and trained teachers—were such when they came to the Seminary and brought enviable reputations as educators with them. The day has gone by when any man can be recognized as a teacher simply because he may have knowledge. Teaching is a profession, and it does not come by nature, on Dogberry's theory, but, like reading and writing, has to be acquired.

It is not unreasonable to concede to these gentlemen that sense of honor and duty which would induce them to take the

initiative, *if* in any way either or both of them should become in fact disqualified, and no one should be more competent to judge of this than themselves. But if a man be so sluggish as not to see his unfitness, when it in fact comes upon him, then let him be frankly and faithfully dealt with.

But they know that no justification or warrant has been given for any attempt, whether by design or inadvertence, to rob them of their well and honestly earned reputations as educators, and to fix a reproach and stigma upon them which a volume of disclaimers would be impotent to remove. The manifestly best as it is the most practicable and honorable thing that can now be done, in reparation and vindication of these men, is to continue them, *unless* found at the time of re-election disqualified in fact.

This subject has not been treated nor submitted to the brethren of these Synods in any captious or fault-finding spirit, but with an earnest desire to render a needed service, and the prayer is that this overture may be received in the spirit that has dictated it.

A FINAL WORD.

In the year 399 B. C., nearly twenty-three hundred years ago, a venerable septuagenarian teacher stood in the presence of a court of several hundred persons, which had just arrested his public career as a teacher by condemning him to death, on charges that did not correspond with the facts respecting his teaching, and expressed his surprise that the majority condemning him was so small; for, said he, "had *three* votes* gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted." He then remarked, "Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name you will get. * * * If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now," he continues, "only to those who have condemned me to death." The nearly equal minority deprecated the unequal and unwise

*Jowett has *thirty*, but my Plato has *treis*, *three*, and not *triakonta*, *thirty*.

Dr. J. Todd, Prof. of Eccles. History, died about a year after his enforced retirement

procedure. Socrates did not crave sympathy, but fair dealing; and yet he was not condemned unheard.

The final outcome of this proceeding was vastly more tragical than is usually noticed. Of course, every school child knows that Socrates drank the hemlock poison and died the victim of a miscarriage of justice. But the accessory sequel is the terrible part. The public soon realised the wrong done the venerable teacher and avenged themselves upon the leading spirits who had procured it, by refusing to speak to them on the streets and in assemblies, visiting upon them social ostracism; refusing them fire from their hearths; refusing to bathe in the same water, but would draw it off and then cleanse and fill the pools anew before using them; till at length these proscribed blundering prosecutors and persecutors found life intolerable and committed suicide. Nemesis, the goddess of retribution, "who keeps watch in the universe, and lets no offence go unchastised," was to those heathen through natural conscience a terrible living presence.

Wrong-doing assumes diverse forms. It is matter of positive information that certain growlers, from whatever motive, have been twitting the Directors of this Seminary, in a vague and irresponsible way, with having too many old men in the Faculty. A more insidious and groundless method of detraction could not be concocted. It is thereby covertly insinuated that years alone—that "Being such a one as Paul the Aged," is of itself a disqualification and a clog to the Seminary. Brethren, is this right? is it honorable and fair dealing with men who hold their places under your approval? Even Paul's Corinthian slanderers trumped up something other than age, by criticising his personal appearance and style—"his bodily presence is weak and his speech of no account" (2 Cor. x. 10). How different the noble veneration of Eliphaz, the Temanite, who prided himself in the prestige due his country because of its old men. He says: "And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in us? With us are both the gray-headed and the very aged men, much elder than thy father,"

i. e., Job's father. And yet Job himself was so venerable that "the aged rose and stood up in his presence." It was a solemn statute in ancient Israel—"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord." (Leviticus xix. 32.) Impiety towards the aged, therefore, is not simply bad form, impolite, or esthetically in bad taste, but a rank sin against God. This *Thou shalt* is not only enacted in the natural fear or reverence of Elohim, but emphasized and sanctioned by Jehovah as the Covenant God of Israel. "We find the thing itself, the deepest reverence to parents and old age, practiced by all the civilised nations of the world, not as a matter of meritorious courtesy, but as a point of rational and absolute duty." Herodotus tells us that in Egypt, if a young person met his senior, he would turn aside; and if an aged person entered an apartment, the youth rose from their seats. "Among the ancient Romans, it was considered a crime worthy of death, not to rise up in the presence of an aged person; and acting a contrary part, was deemed an awful mark of the deep degeneracy of the times:—

> "And had not men *the hoary heads revered*,
> Or boys paid reverence when a man appeared,
> *Both must have died.*"—(*Juvenal.*)

"The beauty of old men is the hoary head," says the sacred proverb. Must it be said to our shame and disgrace that in this God-ordained matter, the spirit of our so-called Christian morals has fallen below the heathen?

The simple truth seems to be, that old people, and especially elderly pastors and church officers, have, by putting them forward of late years, been so anxious to encourage young people to activity in church life, that only too many of them have taken the bit in their teeth or seized the reins and, Phæton-like, threaten disaster by departing from the "old way" and "the good way wherein they should walk." (2 Chron., vi. 27.) It should "give pause," for this spirit of anarchy is honey-combing the Presbyterian Church—by name distinctively manned by elderly men—more seriously than any other. This whole warfare of the present

waged by ill-mannered if not ungodly youth and a contingent of thoughtless middle-aged men and women upon Presbyters, the aged servants of the Church who labor especially in word and doctrine, is richly deserving of rebuke and discouragement, especially when suitable occasions offer for administering it in action rather than in words. The bare appearance of its approval is to be deprecated. And yet, this ill-starred *seventy years rule* inevitably invites and occasions that very sort of thing. Brethren, why not *abolish* it in the true interest of the Church?

The very peace and prosperity of the Church are threatened at times by occurrences which ambitious and unscrupulous political place-seekers do not exceed.

May the God of peace guide us all aright!

SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS.

Columbia, S. C., October 16, 1897.

BRYAN PTG. CO., COLUMBIA, S. C. 16417